

London Borough of Bromley

Petition Scheme

Who can submit a petition or e-petition?

The Council welcomes petitions and a petition can be submitted by any person of any age who lives, works or studies in the borough of Bromley. All petitions will be acknowledged within five working days. To submit an e-petition you will also need to be a registered user. Registration is a simple process that just requires you to provide us with a few details in case we need to contact you about the e-petition. From time to time the Council may also submit an e-petition itself to gauge public feeling on a particular issue.

Who can sign a petition or e-petition?

A petition can be signed by a person of any age who lives, works or studies in Bromley. All petitioners should provide as appropriate their home, work or education establishment address. Anyone signing an e-petition should also include a valid email address, for verification purposes. Details of all signatories will be passed to the lead petitioner on the completion of an e-petition. You can only sign a petition once; the list of signatories will be checked by officers and any duplicate signatures or obviously frivolous responses will be removed.

What issues can my petition or e-petition relate to?

Your petition or e-petition should be relevant to some issue on which the Council has powers or duties or on which it has shared delivery responsibilities through the Local Area Agreement or other partnership arrangement. It should also be submitted in good faith and be decent, honest and respectful. Your e-petition may be rejected if it:

- Contains intemperate, inflammatory, abusive or provocative language.
- Is defamatory, frivolous, vexatious, discriminatory or otherwise offensive; or contains false statements.
- Is too similar to another petition submitted within the past six months.
- Discloses confidential or exempt information, including information protected by a court order or government department.
- Discloses material which is otherwise commercially sensitive.
- Names individuals, or provides information where they may be easily identified, e.g. individual officers of public bodies provided that this exemption will not apply to executive councillors, committee chairmen, the head of paid service or any statutory or non-statutory chief officer.
- Makes criminal accusations.
- Contains advertising statements.
- Refers to an issue which is currently the subject of a formal Council complaint, Local Ombudsman complaint or any legal proceedings.
- Relates to the Council's planning or licensing functions as there are separate statutory processes in place for dealing with these matters.

During politically sensitive periods, such as prior to an election, politically controversial material may need to be restricted.

The Council accepts no liability for the petitions on its web pages. The views expressed in the petitions do not necessarily reflect those of the Council. If your petition relates to an issue which is beyond the powers of the Council to address, it may be more appropriate to start an e-petition on the Number 10 website. Advice on the admissibility of e-petitions can be obtained from Democratic Services (contact details below).

Privacy policy

The details you give us are needed to validate your support but will not be published on the website. This is the same information required for a paper petition. On the completion of an e-petition, your details will be passed on to the principal petitioner. The Council may contact you in relation to any petitions you have signed, unless you have requested not to be contacted when signing the petition or e-petition.

What information should my petition or e-petition contain?

Your petition or e-petition will need to include:

- A title;
- A statement explicitly setting out what action you would like the Council to do or not do. If you wish a Councillor or a senior officer to give account for a matter before a Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee then you must identify that individual and give reasons why they need to;
- Any information which you feel is relevant to the petition/e-petition and reasons why you consider the action requested to be necessary;
- For e-petitions a date for when your e-petition will go live on the website. It may take a couple of days to check your e-petition request and discuss any issues with you so please ensure that you submit the request a few days before you want the e-petition to go live;
- A date for when your e-petition will stop collecting signatures. In order to achieve the maximum impact, you may want to set this date so that the e-petition will be submitted prior to a date on which a debate is to be held or a decision taken on the issue. We will host your e-petition for up to 3 months but would expect most to be shorter in length than this;
- A choice of options for signatories to choose from, i.e. will you simply be asking people to 'agree' with the petition or will you give them the option to 'agree' or 'disagree'?
- As lead petitioner, your name will be displayed with your e-petition on the Website;
- Paper petitions should include space for signatories to complete the required information.

How Many signatures does my petition Need?

To qualify as a valid petition under the Council scheme a paper petition requires a minimum of 25 signatures and an e-petition 50 signatures. In exceptional circumstances, the Council may consider accepting petitions with fewer signatures where there is local issue affecting a small number of residents.

Promoting petitions and e-petitions

Whilst the Council will host e-petitions on its website, it will not generally promote individual e-petitions. It is, therefore, down to the lead petitioner to spread the word about their e-petition in order to get as many people as possible to sign up. If this is not done then your e-petition could receive no signatures. Raising awareness of it could be done in a number of ways such as promoting it on local community websites, discussion forums or newsletters. All it takes is to give people a brief explanation of the issue and then direct them to the Council's website at www.bromley.gov.uk/epetitions to sign up. The Council will not promote or advertise paper petitions or allow copies to be left for signature on its premises although your Ward Councillor may be prepared to assist you or promote your petition.

What happens when the e-petition is complete?

When the e-petition reaches its closing date you will no longer be able to sign it online. The list of signatories will be collated and you will be contacted regarding the submission of the completed e-petition.

What will happen to a Petition or e-Petition once it is submitted?

Once a petition or e-petition has been submitted it will be referred to an appropriate Council officer for consideration. A Councillor (this will normally be the relevant Portfolio Holder, but in some cases it will be the appropriate committee chairman) will be identified to oversee the Council's response. This might include taking the action requested in the petition, or explaining why the action will not be taken. Other possible responses might be to refer the matter to a Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee or to the full Council, to commission research or public consultation, to hold a public meeting or to request an investigation. A response will normally be sent to you within 10 working days and will be posted on the Council's website.

If you are dissatisfied with the response you may ask that the matter is considered by a relevant Policy and Development & Scrutiny Committee. If your petition has more than 250 signatures (500 for an e-petition) you, or a person you nominate, will be invited to address the committee for up to 5 minutes. If your petition has more than 500 signatures (1,000 for an e-petition) you may instead ask that the petition is referred to full Council for consideration and you or your nominee can address the Council up to for 5 minutes. If your petition is to require a Councillor or a senior officer of the Council (except in exceptional circumstances, this will be an officer at Assistant Chief Officer level or above) to give evidence in public before a Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee this will require a petition of 500 signatures (1,000 for an e-petition.)

After considering your petition the Committee or Council can refer it to the Executive, a relevant Portfolio Holder or a Chief Officer with recommendations for action. At the next scheduled meeting of the Committee or Council there will be a report back either

advising that the recommendation has been complied with or giving reasons why it has not been possible to do so. The Director of Legal, Democratic and Customer Services will maintain a register of all petitions submitted and will report annually to Council on petitions received, actions taken to address petitions or reasons why it has not been possible to do so.

What can petitions and e-petitions achieve?

When you submit a petition or an e-petition to the Council it can have positive outcomes that lead to change and inform debate. It can bring an issue to the attention of the Council and show strong public approval or disapproval for something which the Council is doing, and local Councillors will always be informed about petitions which affect their Wards. As a consequence, the Council may decide to, for example, change or review a policy, hold a public meeting or run a public consultation to gather more views on the issue.

Contact Details

For more information and advice or to discuss a potential e-petition, please contact Democratic Services.

(Contact details)

London Borough of Bromley – Petition Scheme Process

